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MEMORANDUM ON KREMLIN REACTIONS

There has undoubtedly been great pressure on Khrushchev for a considerable time to do something about our ring of bases, aggravated by our placing Jupiter missiles in Turkey.

Wherever I went during my visit to the Soviet Union in June 1959, even in Central Asia and Siberia, people asked me, "why do you have your bases threatening to attack us? we were such close allies during the war. Why don't you want to live in peace?" Since I had been highly publicized during the war, the Russians approached me as a friend.

In my judgment, Khrushchev has been under pressure from his military and from the more aggressive group to use Cuba to counter US action and to offset the humiliation to which they consider they have been subjected by nuclear bases close to their borders.

Khrushchev frequently blabs in one way or another about what is discussed in Kremlin councils. An item of particular interest in this connection is his statement that the Soviet Union must now be dealt with as our equal in strength and that this has become more definite as a result of Soviet influence in the Western Hemisphere. Another revealing statement was his remark to Robert Frost that democracies are too liberal to be able to act vigorously, inferring, too soft to attack. This sounds like the arguments of his tougher advisers when they were urging missile bases in Cuba.

I have felt from the first time it was proposed that the placing of our missiles in Turkey and Italy was counter-productive, both in our relations with the Soviet Union and domestically, particularly in Italy. This is especially so because the missiles can be destroyed so easily, but beyond that they have been humiliating to

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Soviet pride in that they had to permit such a threat to exist so near.

I have also thought for some years that since we were abandoning bases, either because of local pressures or because they were no longer needed, they should have been used in negotiations with the Soviet Union. Khrushchev could have made political hay with his people to justify a more cooperative approach, if he could have maintained that these bases had been eliminated through his negotiation.

Since 1941 I have been convinced that we should do our best to reduce the influence of the tougher group in the Kremlin councils to the advantage of those who were more cooperative.

I recall in 1941 I reported to President Roosevelt on my return from Moscow that Molotov was in the doghouse with Stalin because of the collapse of the Ribbentrop Treaty, that he was a type with whom we could never deal, that we should avoid doing anything to build him up and attempt to get him pushed aside. In that visit to the Soviet Union I got Stalin to remove Gurmansky as Ambassador to the United States and replace him with Litvinov. Gurmanski was rigid, whereas Litvinov of course was more cooperative.

However, these possibilities were not understood in Washington. Molotov was invited to come to the U.S. in the Spring of 1942 and treated with great dignity. He then went to London and signed the pact with the British. When I saw him again with Stalin in August 1942 he no longer showed signs of being worried about his position. He was in fact puffed up like a poisoned toad.

The net of the above is that I strongly urge we recognize the conflict that is undoubtedly going on within the Soviet Union, that Khrushchev has been induced

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to take this dangerous action in Cuba by the tougher group. Consequently, we should handle the situation today in such a way as to make it possible for Khrushchev to save his own face, to blame this tough group and to swing in the more cooperative direction. I use the words "more cooperative" in the limited Communist sense, not in its meaning to us.

W. Averell Harriman

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October 22, 1962

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